EASTER
is pagan!

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The Resurrection was not on Easter Sunday! Easter is not a Christian name, but the title of the idolatrous "queen of heaven." Here's the true origin and meaning of Lent, Easter eggs, hot cross buns!

WHY DO you believe the things you believe, do the things you do?

The chances are you never stopped to ask yourself that question. You have been taught since childhood to accept Easter as the chief of the Christian holidays.

You have supposed it is part of the true Christian religion to observe Lent, "Holy Week," "Good Friday," to buy hot-cross buns at the bakery, to have colored Easter eggs, to dress up and go to Church Easter Sunday—perhaps to attend an Easter sunrise service!

Because of the "sheep" instinct in humans most of us believe a lot of things that are not true. Most of us do a lot of things that are *wrong*, supposing these things to be right, or even sacred!

Ishtar, the Pagan Goddess

What is the *meaning* of the name "Easter?" You have been led to suppose the word means "resurrection of Christ." For 1600 years the western world has been taught that Christ rose from the dead on Sunday morning. But that is merely one of the *fables* the apostle Paul warned readers of the New Testament to expect. The resurrection did not occur on Sunday! For the astonishing proof setting forth the exact time of the Resurrection, write for our free booklet, "The Resurrection."

The name "Easter" is merely the slightly changed English spelling of the name of the ancient Assyrian goddess Ishtar, pronounced by the Assyrians exactly as we pronounce "Easter." The Babylonian name of this goddess was Astarte, consort of Baal, the Sun-god, whose worship is denounced by the Almighty in the Bible as the most abominable of all pagan idolatry.

Look up the word "Easter" in Webster's dictionary. You will find: "AS. (Anglo-Saxon), from name of old Teuton goddess of spring."

In the large 5-volume Hastings Bible Dictionary, only six brief lines are given to the name "Easter," because it occurs only once in the Bible—and that only in the King James translation. Says Hastings: "Easter, used in Authorized Version as the translation of 'Pascha' in Acts 12:4, 'intending after *Easter* to bring him forth to the people.' Revised Version has substituted correctly 'the Passover.' "

Apostles Observed Passover

The World Almanac, 1950 edition, page 704, says: "In the second century, A.D., Easter Day was, among Christians in Asia Minor" (that is, in the Churches at Ephesus, Galatia, etc.,—the so-called "Gentile" churches raised up by the Apostle Paul)

"the 14th of Nisan, the seventh month of the Jewish calendar." In other words, the 14th day of the *first* month of the sacred calendar, and it was not then called by the name of the pagan deity "Easter," but by the BIBLE name "PASSOVER."

Passover, the days of unleavened bread, Pentecost, and the holy days God had ordained *forever* were all observed by Jesus, and the early apostles, and the converted Gentile Christians (Acts 2:1; 12:3; 20:6; 18:21; I Cor. 5:7-8; Acts 20:16; I Cor. 16:8). Passover is a memorial of the crucifixion of Christ. Passover, observed by the early true Church, occurred not on Sunday or any fixed day of the week, but a calendar day of the year. The day of the week varies from year to year.

Easter is one of the pagan days Paul warned Gentile converts they must not return to observing.

How, then, did this pagan festival enter into and fasten itself upon a professing Christianity? That is a surprising story—but first, notice the true origin and nature of Easter.

Its Chaldean Origin

Easter, as Hislop says ("The Two Babylons,") "bears its Chaldean origin on its very forehead. Easter is nothing else than *Astarte*, one of the titles of Beltis, the 'queen of heaven,' whose name, as pronounced by the people of Nineveh, was evidently identical with that now in common use in this country."

The ancient gods of the pagans had many different names. While this goddess was called Astarte in Babylon, it appears on Assyrian monuments found by Layard in excavations at Nineveh as Ishtar (Layard's *Nineveh and Babylon,* page 629). Both were pronounced "Easter." Likewise, Beltis, or Bel (referred to in the Old Testament) also was called Moloch. It was for sacrificing to Moloch (I Kings 11:1-11, especially verse 7, where Moloch is called an abomination) and other pagan gods that The Eternal condemned Solomon, and rended away the Kingdom of Israel from his son.

In the ancient Chaldean idolatrous Sun-worship, Baal was the Sun-god, Astarte his consort, or wife. And Astarte is the same as Ishtar, or the English Easter.

Says Hislop: "The festival, of which we read in church history, under the name of Easter, in the third or fourth centuries, was quite a different festival from that now observed in the Romish (and Protestant) church, and *at that time was not known by any such name as Easter.* IT WAS CALLED PASSOVER, and was very early observed by Christians . . . That festival agreed originally with the time of the Jewish Passover, when Christ was crucified. . . . That festival was not idolatrous, *and was preceded by no Lent.*"

Where Did We Get LENT?

"It ought to be known," wrote Cassianus in the fifth century, "that the observance of the forty days (Lent) had no existence, so long as the perfection of that primitive Church remained inviolate."

Jesus observed no Lent. The apostles and the early true Church of God observed no Lenten season. Then how did this observance originate?

"The forty days' abstinence of Lent was directly borrowed from the worshippers of the Babylonian goddess. Such a Lent of forty days, 'in the spring of the year,' is still observed by the Yezidis or pagan Devil-worshippers of Koordistan, who have inherited it from their early masters, the Babylonians. Such a Lent was held by the pagan Mexicans, *in honor of the sun.* . . . Such a Lent was observed in Egypt (Wilkinson's *Egyptians*). This Egyptian Lent of forty days was held expressly in commemoration of Adonis or Osiris, the great mediatorial god." (*The Two Babylons,* by Hislop, pages 104 and 105, and *Sabean Researches,* by Landseer, p. 112).

Do you realize what has happened? God Almighty commanded His people to observe the PASSOVER *forever!* (Ex. 12:24). This command was given while the Israelites were still in Egypt, *prior* to the Old Covenant, or the Law of Moses! It pictured, before the Crucifixion, Christ's death for the remission of our sins, as a type looking forward to it. At His last Passover, Jesus *changed* the emblems used from the blood of a lamb and eating its roasted body to the bread and wine.

Jesus did not abolish Passover—He merely CHANGED the emblems, or symbols used. All the apostles of Christ, and true Christians of the first century true Church observed it, on the 14th day of the first month of the sacred calendar. It is now a MEMORIAL of Christ's death, reaffirming, year by year on its anniversary, the true Christian's FAITH in the blood of Christ for the remission of his sins, and the broken body of Christ for his physical healing.

But what has happened? DO YOU REALIZE IT? All western nations have been *deceived* into dropping the festival God ordained forever to commemorate the death of the true Saviour for our sins, and substituting in its place the PAGAN festival in commemoration of the counterfeit "saviour" and mediator of Baal, the SUN GOD, named after the mythical Ishtar, his wife—actually none other than the ancient Semirimus, who palmed herself

off as the wife of the sun-god, the idolatrous "QUEEN OF HEAVEN."

THIS is not Christian! IT IS PAGAN TO THE CORE!

Yet scores of millions of Americans are deceived into observing this form of heathen idolatry, under the delusion they are honoring Jesus Christ the Son of the Creator GOD!

Easter does not honor Christ! And yet, have *you* not been, like a blind sheep, following the other millions in this custom? "The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth to come to repentance."

Hot Cross Buns and Dyed Eggs

But did you know the hot cross buns, and dyed Easter eggs also figured in the idolatrous Chaldean rites, just as they do in Easter observance today?

Yes, these are pagan, too. The "buns," known by that identical name, were used in the worship of the "queen of heaven," the goddess Easter, as early as the days of Cecrops, the founder of Athens, 1500 years before Christ. (*The Two Babylons,* pgs. 107-108).

"One species of sacred bread," says Bryant, in *Mythology*, Vol. 1, p. 373, "which used to be offered to the gods, was of great antiquity, and called Boun."

It will astonish you, but it's true—one of the reasons God drove the Jews into Babylonian captivity was this very idolatry—*their whole families* joined in this idolatrous worship, in making and offering HOT CROSS BUNS!

Read the entire 7th chapter of Jeremiah. Here is God's stern sentence upon Judah, thru Jeremiah the prophet, "If you really amend your life and *doings,*" God warns them, "I will allow you to remain in this place (Palestine) for all time." But they would not listen. Then "I will cast you out of my sight," says God to Judah. And to Jeremiah He says, "Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah . . . ?

"The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, TO MAKE CAKES TO THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN . . . that they may provoke me to anger. . . . Therefore thus saith the Eternal God: Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, upon beast . . . and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched." (Verses 18-20.)

The Hebrew word for "cakes" as Jeremiah originally wrote it is "kavvan," and really means "BUNS." The word "bun" seems, says Hislop, to have been derived from this word. This Hebrew word is used nowhere else in the Bible, except

Jer. 44:19, where again the same idolatrous worship to the queen of heaven by these hot cross buns is mentioned. Every other place in the Bible where the English word "cakes" is used, a different Hebrew word was used in the original.

Jeremiah was referring to HOT CROSS BUNS–exactly the same kind hundreds of you who read this have been buying and eating at "Easter season!"

The origin of the Easter egg is just as clear. It is recorded in Davies' *Druids,* p. 208, that the ancient Druids bore an egg as the sacred emblem of their idolatrous order. On p. 207, same history, it is recorded that in the mysteries of Bacchus, as celebrated in Athens, part of the idolatrous ceremony consisted in the consecration of an egg. Hindoo fables celebrate their mundane egg as of a golden color. It has been ancient custom in Japan to make their sacred egg a hard brazen color. In China dyed or painted eggs are used on "sacred" heathen festivals. In the idolatry of ancient Egypt and Greece eggs were used in their religious rites.

WHY do Americans who believe themselves to be Christians dye eggs at Easter? Do they suppose the BIBLE ordained, or commands, this heathen custom? THERE IS NOT A WORD OF IT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. Certainly Christ did not start it, and the apostles and early Christians did none of it!

Then WHY SHOULD YOU DO IT TODAY? Why follow heathenism and try to convince yourself you are a Christian? God calls such things ABOMINATION!

How Easter Crept into the Church

Such is the origin and early history of Easter. How, then, was this pagan festival injected into the professing Christian religion, as a substitute for an ordinance of God?

Before revealing briefly the astonishing account of this great deception, two facts must be firmly fixed in mind.

First, Jesus and the apostles foretold, *not* a universal, wide-spread popular growth of the true New Testament Church, but A FALLING AWAY FROM THE TRUTH on the part of the great majority. Prophesying a popular, universal FALLING AWAY from the faith once delivered, to the Thessalonians Paul stated, "the mystery of iniquity doth already work," only some 30 years after the Church began! He referred to the very "Chaldean Mysteries," of which Easter and Christmas were the two chief festivals!

Second, although Jesus said the gates of hell would never prevail against *His* Church, yet it is everywhere prophesied thru the New Testament

as the "Little Flock"—never as a great, large, popular universal church.

This is the very fact the world does not realize today!

TWO Churches—One False, One True

In New Testament prophecy TWO CHURCHES are described.

One, the great and powerful and universal church, a *part* of the world, actually ruling in its politics over many nations, and united with the "Holy Roman Empire," brought to a concrete focus in Rev. 17.

This church is pictured with great pomp, ritual and display, decked in purple, scarlet and gold—proud, worldly, boastful. She is pictured as a universal DECEIVER—the whole western world spiritually DRUNK with her false doctrines, their spiritual perception so blurred by her paganized teachings and practices they are unable to clearly distinguish TRUTH! She boasts she is the true Church, yet she is drunken with the blood of the saints she has caused to be martyred!

But how could she have deceived the whole world, as foretold in God's Word? Surely, the Protestant world isn't deceived!

O, *but it is!* Notice, verse 5, she is a MOTHER church! Her daughters are also *churches* who have come out of her, even in protest, calling themselves Protestant—but they are fundamentally of her family in pagan doctrines and practices! They, too, make themselves a *part of* this world, taking active part in its politics—the very act which made a "whore" out of their MOTHER!

The entire apostate family—Mother, and more than 500 daughter denominations, all divided against each other and in CONFUSION of doctrines, yet all united in the chief pagan doctrines and festivals—has a family NAME! They call themselves "Christian," but God calls them something else!—"MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT!"

"Babylon" means confusion! God always names people and things by calling them *what they are!* And here is the same identical ancient BABYLONIAN MYSTERIES now wrapped in the false cloak labeled "Christianity"—but in fact it is the same old "CHALDEAN MYSTERIES!" THUS GOD NAMES THIS RELIGIOUS SYSTEM!

TRUE Church Small—Scattered

But where, then, was the TRUE Church?

Did the true Church of God, of which Jesus Christ is the Living, Directing Head, become perverted—did it merely apostatize into the system described above?

NO! The gates of hell have never prevailed against the true Church of God, and never will! The true Church has never fallen! It has never ceased!

But the true Church of God is pictured in prophecy as the "*Little* Flock!" The New Testament describes this Church as continually persecuted, despised by the large popular churches because it is not OF this world or its politics, but has kept itself unspotted *from* the world! It has always kept the Commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus. It has kept God's festivals, not the pagan holidays. It has been empowered with the Spirit of God!

That Church *never* degenerated into the great popular church at Rome, as the protestant world supposes! That Church always has existed, and it exists today!

Then *where did it go?* Where was it during the middle ages?

First, remember this Church was never large, never politically powerful, or a world-known ORGANIZATION OF MEN. It is a SPIRITUAL ORGANISM, not a political organization. It is composed of all whose hearts and lives have been CHANGED by the Spirit of God, whether visibly together, or individually scattered.

Under the lash of continual persecution and opposition of the organized forces of this world, it is difficult for such a people to remain UNITED and ORGANIZED together.

Daniel prophesied the true people of God would be scattered (Dan. 12:7). Ezekiel foretold it (34:5-12). Jeremiah, too, (23:1-2). Jesus foretold it (Mat. 26:31). The apostolic church was soon scattered by persecution (Acts 8:1). James addresses his letter to Christians *scattered* abroad (Jas. 1:1).

Ignored by Most Histories

You don't read much of *this* true Body of Christ in the secular histories of this world! No, the world little notes, nor long remembers, the activities of this "LITTLE FLOCK," hated and despised by the world, driven to the wilderness by persecution, always opposed, usually scattered! But there are enough references to it in authentic histories to show that it has continued thru every century to now!

The prophecies bring this Church into concrete focus in the 12th chapter of Revelation. There she is shown spiritually, in the glory and splendor of the Spirit of God, but visibly in the world as a persecuted, Commandment-keeping Church *driven into the wilderness,* for 1260 years, thru the middle ages!

Even in Paul's day, many among those attending at Antioch, at Jerusalem, at Ephesus, at Corinth, and other places, began to apostatize and turn away from the truth. Divisions sprang up. Those individuals, unconverted or turned from God's TRUTH and WAY OF LIFE, were *no part of God's true* Church, tho visibly assembling with those who were. The "mystery of iniquity" was already working, INSIDE these visible churches. This apostacy *increased!* By the year 125 A.D. the majority in most churches, especially those Gentile-born, were continuing in many of their old pagan beliefs and practices, tho *professing* to be Christian! Gradually, a smaller and smaller portion of the VISIBLE churches going by the name "Christian" remained truly yielded to God and His Truth, and led of His Spirit. After Constantine took virtual control of the visible, professing Church in the early fourth century, this visible organization became almost wholly pagan, and began excommunicating and persecuting all who held to the true WORD OF GOD! Finally, it became necessary for real Christians who, even as a scattered people, *alone* composed the TRUE Christian Church, to FLEE from the jurisdiction of Rome in order truly to worship God! Thus, the visible, organized Church which rose to power was the FALSE Church—the "Great Whore" of Rev. 17.

Injected into the Church

Nothing illustrates this very fact more vividly than the actual history of the injecting of Easter into the western Church.

Here is the quick, brief history of it, from the Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th edition, article on "EASTER:"

"There is no indication of the observance of the Easter festival in the New Testament, or in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. . . . The first Christians" (the original TRUE Church) "continued to observe the Jewish" (that is GOD'S) "festivals, though in a new spirit, as commemorations of events which those festivals had foreshadowed. Thus the Passover, with a new conception added to it, of Christ as the true Paschal Lamb and the first fruits from the dead, continued to be observed.

"Although the observance of Easter was at a very early period the practice of the Christian Church, a serious difference as to the day for its observance soon arose between the Christians of Jewish and those of Gentile descent, which led to a long and bitter controversy. With the Jewish Christians . . . the fast ended . . . on the 14th day of the moon at evening . . . without regard to the day of the week. The Gentile Christians on the other hand" (that is, the beginning of the Catholic church, now substituting pagan for true Christian doctrines) ". . . identified the first day of the week with the resurrection, and kept the preceding Friday as the commemoration of the crucifixion, irrespective of the day of the month.

"Generally speaking, the Western Churches" (Catholic) "kept Easter on the 1st day of the week, while the Eastern Churches" (containing most of those who remained as part of the TRUE Christian church) "followed the Jewish rule." (That is, observing Passover on the 14th of the first sacred month instead of the pagan Easter.)

"Polycarp, the disciple of John the Evangelist, and bishop of Smyrna, visited Rome in 159 to confer with Anicetus, the bishop of that see, on the subject, and urged the tradition *which he had received from the apostle* of observing the 14th day. Anicetus, however, declined. About forty years later" (197), "the question was discussed in a very different spirit between Victor, bishop of Rome, and Polycrates, metropolitan of proconsular Asia" (the territory of the Churches at Ephesus, Galatia, Antioch, Philadelphia, and all those mentioned in Rev. 2 and 3—the churches established thru the apostle Paul). "That province was the only portion of Christendom which still adhered to the Jewish" (the writer should have used the words "true Christian" instead of "Jewish") "usage. Victor demanded that *all* should adopt the usage prevailing at Rome. This Polycrates firmly refused to agree to, and urged many weighty reasons to the contrary, whereupon Victor proceeded to excommunicate Polycrates and the Christians who continued the Eastern usage" (that is, who continued in GOD'S way, as Jesus, Peter, Paul, and all the early true Church had done). "He was, however, restrained" (by other bishops) "from actually proceeding to enforce the decree of excommunication . . . and the Asiatic churches retained their usage unmolested. We find the Jewish" (true Christian Passover) "usage from time to time reasserting itself after this, but it never prevailed to any large extent.

"A final settlement of the dispute was one among the other reasons which led Constantine to summon the council at Nicaea in 325. At that time the Syrians and Antiochenes were the solitary champions of the observance of the 14th day. The decision of the council was unanimous that Easter was to be kept on Sunday, and on the same Sunday throughout the world, and that 'none hereafter should follow the blindness of the Jews.'" (That is, in plain language, the Catholic church now decreed that none should be allowed to follow the ways of CHRIST—of the TRUE Christian Church!)

". . . The *few* who afterwards separated themselves from the unity of the church" (Roman church), "and continued to keep the 14th day, were named *'Quarto-decimani,'* and the dispute itself is known as the *'Quarto-deciman* controversy.'"

Thus you see how the politically organized church at Rome grew to great size and power by adopting popular pagan practices; how she gradually stamped out the true teachings, doctrines, and practices of CHRIST, and the true Church, so far as any collective practice is concerned.

It was only by violence and bloodshed, at last, says Hislop (*The Two Babylons,* p. 107), that the idolatrous festival of the Chaldean goddess Easter came to supersede that which God had ordained to be observed *forever*!

True Christians Kept PASSOVER

The New Testament reveals that Jesus, the apostles, and the New Testament Church, both Jewish and Gentile-born, observed God's Sabbaths, and God's festivals—weekly and annually! Take your Bible and carefully read Acts 2:1, 12:3-4 (the word "Easter" here is a flagrant false translation in "King James" version—originally inspired "Passover," and so corrected in the Revised version); Acts 18:21; 20:6; 20-16; I Cor. 16:8.

Eusebius, historian of the early centuries of the Church, speaks of the true Christians observing Passover on the 14th of Nisen, first month of the sacred calendar.

The historian Gieseler wrote that "the Gentile Christians observed also the Sabbath and the Passover," during the latter half of the first century.

But as the false paganized Church grew in size and political power, decrees were passed by 363 A.D. imposing the death sentence upon Christians found keeping God's Sabbath, or God's festivals. Finally, in order to keep the true Way of God, a large portion of the true Christians (composing the true Church) "fled into the wilderness," as foretold in Rev. 12:6, where they were fed on the pure Word of God 1260 long years!

But another large portion of the TRUE Church of God, failing to flee, yet remaining true to God's Truth, paid with their lives in martyrdom (Rev. 6:9; 13:15; 17:6; 18:24). History records that more than 50 million were martyred!

They loved obedience to God more than their lives! DO YOU?

But through all generations, thru every century, though persecuted, scattered, unrecognized by the world, many true Christians have kept alive the TRUE CHURCH OF GOD—the Church composed of those Satan *cannot* deceive! (Mat. 24:24.)

Easter Sun-Rise Services

You think Easter sun-rise services beautiful? LISTEN! God was showing the prophet Ezekiel the sins of His people in a vision—*a prophecy for today!* "Turn thee yet again," said God, "and thou shalt see *greater abominations* than these" (Ezekiel had just been shown, in vision, idol-worship among professing people of God). "And he brought me (in vision) into the inner court of the Eternal's house, and behold . . . between the porch and the altar were about five and twenty men, with . . . *their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east.* Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? *Is it a light thing* . . . that they commit the ABOMINATIONS which they commit here? . . . Therefore will I deal IN FURY: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet *will I not hear them!*" (Ezek. 8:15-18.)

Do you grasp what this *most abominable thing* is?

It is the same identical thing millions are doing every Easter Sunday morning—the sun-rise service —standing with *their faces toward the east,* as the SUN is rising, in a service of worship which honors the SUN and his mythical idolatrous consort goddess Easter. Yes, deceived into believing this is *Christian,* millions practice every Easter the identical form of the ancient SUN-WORSHIP of the Sun-god BAAL! Throughout the Bible this is revealed as THE MOST ABOMINABLE of all idolatry in the sight of the Eternal Creator!

Do *you* think this makes no difference, today? *It makes all the difference between life and death —between being* SAVED, *and* LOST!

It is a serious thing to write to you, my readers, these truths—*for now you have the* KNOWLEDGE *of the* TRUTH*!* And *"if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,* but a CERTAIN fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries!" (Heb. 10:26-27.)

Yes, it makes a difference! Thousands had to flee the jurisdiction of "civilization" to keep God's ways! Other thousands paid with their lives for obeying God—but they shall LIVE forever, in the Resurrection!

This world's ways have brought only sorrow, suffering, chaos, death! GOD'S WAYS are the only ways that lead to Peace, lasting Prosperity, Happiness, Joy, Eternal Life! If Baal be god, then go serve him; but if The ETERNAL is your God, *then* SERVE HIM!

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Ishtar the Pagan Goddess

What is the meaning of the name "Easter"? You have been led to suppose the word means "resurrection of Christ." For 1600 years the Western world has been taught that Christ rose from the dead on Sunday morning. But that is merely one of the fables the Apostle Paul warned readers of the New Testament to expect. The resurrection did not occur on Sunday! (For the astonishing proof setting forth the exact time of the resurrection, write for our free booklet *The Resurrection Was Not on Sunday.)*

The name "Easter," which is merely the slightly changed English spelling of the name of the ancient Assy-

rian and Babylonian goddess Ishtar, comes to us from old Teutonic mythology where it is known as Ostern. The Phoenician name of this goddess was Astarte, consort of Baal, the sun god, whose worship is denounced by the Almighty in the Bible as the most abominable of all pagan idolatry.

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Apostles Observed Passover

The *World Almanac,* 1968 edition, page 187, says: "In the second century A.D., Easter Day was, among Christians in Asia Minor [that is, in the Churches at Ephesus, Galatia, etc. — the so-called "Gentile" churches raised up by the Apostle Paul] the 14th of Nisan, the seventh month of the Jewish [civil] calendar." In other words, the 14th day of the *first* month of the sacred calendar, and it was not then called by the name of the pagan deity "Easter," but by the Bible name "Passover."

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Easter, as Alexander Hislop says (*The Two Babylons,* p. 103), "bears its Chaldean origin on its very forehead. Easter is nothing else than *Astarte,* one of the titles of Beltis, the queen of heaven. . . ."

The ancient gods of the pagans had many different names. While this goddess was called Astarte by the Phoenicians, it appears on Assyrian monuments found by Layard in excavations at Nineveh as Ishtar (Austen H. Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon,* Vol. II, p. 629). Both were pronounced "Easter." Likewise, Bel (referred to in the Old Testament), also was called Molech. It was for sacrificing to Molech (I Kings 11:1-11, especially verse 7, where Molech is called an abomination) and other pagan gods that the Eternal condemned Solomon, and rended away the Kingdom of Israel from his son.

In the ancient Chaldean idolatrous sun-worship, as practiced by the Phoenicians, Baal was the sun god; Astarte, his consort or wife. And Astarte is the same as Ishtar, or the English "Easter."

Says Hislop: "The festival, of which we read in Church history, under the name of Easter, in the third or fourth centuries, was quite a different festival from that now observed in the Romish [and Protestant] Church, and at that time was not known by any such name as Easter. It was called Pascha, or the Passover, and . . . was very early observed by many professing Christians. . . . That festival agreed originally with the time of the Jewish Passover, when Christ was crucified. . . . That festival was not idolatrous, and it was preceded by no Lent" (*The Two Babylons,* p. 104).

Where Did We Get Lent?

"Howbeit you should know," wrote Johannes Cassianus (John Cassian) in the fifth century, "that as long as the primitive church retained its perfection unbroken, this

observance of Lent did not exist" (*First Conference Abbot Theonas,* chapter 30).

Jesus observed no Lent. The apostles and the early true Church of God observed no Lenten season. Then how did this observance originate?

"The forty days' abstinence of Lent was directly borrowed from the worshippers of the Babylonian goddess. Such a Lent of forty days, in the spring of the year, is still observed by the Yezidis or pagan Devil-worshippers of Kudistan, who have inherited it from their early masters, the Babylonians. Such a Lent of forty days was held in spring by the Pagan Mexicans.... Such a Lent of forty days was observed in Egypt..." (*The Two Babylons,* pp. 104, 105). In fact this Egyptian Lent of forty days was observed expressly in honor of Osiris, also known as Adonis in Syria and Tammuz in Babylonia (*Sabaean Researches,* by John Landseer, pp. 111, 112).

Do you realize what has happened? God Almighty commanded His people to observe the Passover forever! (Ex. 12:24.) This command was given while the Israelites were still in Egypt, prior to the Old Covenant, or the Law of Moses! It pictured, before the crucifixion, Christ's death for the remission of our sins, as a type looking forward to it. At His last Passover, Jesus *changed* the emblems used from the blood of a lamb and eating its roasted body to the bread and wine.

Jesus did not abolish Passover — He merely changed the emblems, or symbols used. All the apostles of Christ and true Christians of the first century true Church observed it on the 14th day of the first month of the sacred calendar. It is now a memorial of Christ's death, reaffirming, year by year on its anniversary, the true Christian's faith in the blood of Christ for the remission of his sins, and the broken body of Christ for his physical healing.

But what has happened? Do you realize it? All Western nations have been deceived into dropping the festival God ordained forever to commemorate the death of the true Saviour for our sins, and substituting in its place the pagan festival in commemoration of the counterfeit "savior" and mediator Baal, the sun god, named after the

mythical Ishtar, his wife — actually none other than the ancient Semiramis, who palmed herself off as the wife of the sun god, the idolatrous "queen of heaven."

This is not Christian! It is pagan to the core!

Yet scores of millions are deceived into observing this form of heathen idolatry, under the delusion they are honoring Jesus Christ the Son of the Creator God!

Easter does not honor Christ! And yet, have you not been like a blind sheep, following the other millions in observing this custom? "The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30).

Dyed Eggs

But did you know that dyed Easter eggs also figured in the ancient Babylonian mystery rites, just as they do in Easter observance today? Yes, these are pagan, too.


It is recorded in Edward Davies' *The Mythology and Rites of the British Druids,* page 210, that the ancient Druids bore an egg as the sacred emblem of their idolatrous order.

Eggs were sacred to many ancient civilizations and formed an integral part of the religious ceremonies in Egypt and in the Orient.

According to James Bonwick: "Eggs were hung up in the Egyptian temples. Bunsen calls attention to the mundane egg, the emblem of generative life, proceeding from the mouth of the great god of Egypt. The mystic egg of Babylon, hatching the Venus Ishtar, fell from heaven to the Euphrates. Dyed eggs were sacred Easter offerings in Egypt, as they are still in China and Europe. Easter, or spring, was the season of birth, terrestrial and celestial" (*Egyptian Belief and Modern Thought,* pp. 211-212).

Why do people who believe themselves to be Christians dye eggs at Easter? Do they suppose the Bible ordained, or commands, this heathen custom? There is not a word of it in the New Testament. Certainly Christ did not start it, and the apostles and early Christians did none of it!

Then why should you do it today? Why follow hea-



thenism and try to convince yourself you are a Christian? God calls such things abomination!

Easter Sunrise Services

You think Easter sunrise services are beautiful? Listen! God was showing the Prophet Ezekiel the sins of His people in a vision — a prophecy for today! "Turn thee yet again," said God, "and thou shalt see *greater abominations* than these [Ezekiel had just been shown, in vision, idol worship among professing people of God]. And he brought me [in vision] into the inner court of the Eternal's house, and behold . . . between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with . . . *their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east.* Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? *Is it a light thing* . . . that they commit the abominations which they commit here? . . . Therefore will I deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them"! (Ezek. 8:15-18.)

Do you grasp what this most abominable thing is?

It is the identical thing millions are doing every Easter Sunday morning — the sunrise service — standing with their faces toward the east, as the sun is rising, in a service of worship which honors the sun god and his mythical idolatrous consort, goddess Easter. Yes, deceived into believing this is Christian, millions practice every Easter the identical form of the ancient sun worship of the sun god Baal! Throughout the Bible this is revealed as the most abominable of all idolatry in the sight of the Eternal Creator!

How Easter Crept Into the Church

Such is the origin and early history of Easter.

How, then, was this pagan festival injected into pro-

Colorfully dyed Easter eggs have been traced by scholars to early Egypt. They were also featured in the ancient Babylonian mystery rites.

Laenderpress Photo

fessing Christian religion, as a substitute for an ordinance of God?

Before revealing briefly the astonishing account of this great deception, two facts must be firmly fixed in mind.

First, Jesus and the apostles foretold, *not* a universal, widespread popular growth of the true New Testament Church, but a falling away from the truth on the part of the great majority. Prophesying a popular, universal falling away from the faith once delivered, to the Thessalonians Paul stated, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work," only some 20 years after the Church began! He referred to the very "Chaldean Mysteries," of which Easter and Christmas were the two chief festivals!

Second, although Jesus said the gates of hell would never prevail against His church, yet it is prophesied in the New Testament to be the "little flock" — never as a great, large, popular universal church (Luke 12:32).

This is the very fact the world does not realize today!

TWO Churches — One False, One True

In New Testament prophecy two churches are described.

One, the great and powerful and universal church, a part of the world, actually ruling in its politics over many nations, and united with the "Holy Roman Empire," is brought to a concrete focus in Revelation 17.

This church is pictured with great pomp, ritual and display, decked in purple, scarlet and gold — proud, worldly, boastful. She is pictured as a universal deceiver — all the Western nations spiritually drunk with her false doctrines, their spiritual perception so blurred by her paganized teachings and practices they are unable to clearly distinguish truth! She boasts she is the true Church, yet she is drunken with the blood of the saints she has caused to be martyred!

But how could she have deceived the whole world, as foretold in God's Word? Surely, the Protestant world isn't deceived!

Oh, but it is! Notice, verse 5, she is a *mother* church!

Her daughters are also churches who have come out of her, in protest, calling themselves Protestant — but they are fundamentally of her family in pagan doctrines and practices! They, too, make themselves a part of this world, taking active part in its politics — the very act which made a "harlot" out of their mother!

The entire apostate family — mother, and more than 400 daughter denominations, all divided against each other and in confusion of doctrines, yet all united in the chief pagan doctrines and festivals — has a family name! They call themselves "Christian," but God calls them something else — "Mystery, Babylon the Great"!

"Babylon" means confusion! God always names people and things by calling them what they are! And here are the identical ancient Babylonian Mysteries now wrapped in the false cloak labeled "Christianity" — but in fact it is the same old "Babylonian Mystery System."

But where, then, was the true Church?

TRUE Church Small — Scattered

Did the true Church of God, of which Jesus Christ is the living, directing Head, become perverted — did it merely apostatize into the system described above?

No! The gates of hell have never prevailed against the true Church of God, and never will! The true Church has never fallen! It has never ceased!

But the true Church of God is pictured in prophecy as the *"little* flock"! The New Testament describes this Church as continually persecuted, despised by the large popular churches because it is not OF this world or its politics, but has kept itself unspotted from the world! It has always kept the Commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Rev. 12:17). It has kept God's Festivals, not the pagan holidays. It has been empowered with the Spirit of God!

That Church *never* became the great popular church at Rome, as the Protestant world supposes! That Church has always existed, and it exists today!

Then where did it go? Where was it during the Middle



Wide World

Costumed players reenact the resurrection drama at Easter sunrise services. Similar services were held thousands of years before Christ.

Ages? Where is it today? (Write for our free reprint article "Where is the True Church?")

First, remember this Church was never large, never politically powerful, or a world-known organization of men. It is a spiritual organism, not a political organization. It is composed of all whose hearts and lives have been changed by the Spirit of God, whether visibly together, or individually scattered.

Under the lash of continual persecution and opposi-

tion from the organized forces of this world, it is difficult for such a people to remain united and organized together.

Daniel prophesied the true people of God would be scattered (Dan. 12:7). Ezekiel foretold it (Ezek. 34:5-12). Jeremiah, too (Jer. 23:1-2). Jesus foretold it (Matt. 26:31). The apostolic Church was soon scattered by persecution (Acts 8:1).

Ignored by Most Histories

You don't read much of *this* true Body of Christ in the secular histories of this world! No, the world little notes, nor long remembers, the activities of this "little flock," hated and despised by the world, driven to the wilderness by persecution, always opposed, usually scattered! But there are enough references to it in authentic histories to show that it has continued through every century to now!

The prophecies bring this Church into concrete focus in the 12th chapter of Revelation. There she is shown spiritually, in the glory and splendor of the Spirit of God, but visibly in the world as a persecuted Commandment-keeping Church driven into the wilderness, for 1260 years, through the Middle Ages!

Even in Paul's day, many among those attending at Antioch, at Jerusalem, at Ephesus, at Corinth, and other places, began to apostatize and turn away from the truth. Divisions sprang up. Those individuals, unconverted or turned from God's truth and way of life, were no part of God's true Church, though visibly assembling with those who were. The "mystery of iniquity" was already working inside these visible churches. This apostasy increased! By the year 125 A.D. the majority in most churches, especially those Gentile-born, were continuing in many of their old pagan beliefs and practices, though professing to be Christian! Gradually, a smaller and smaller portion of the visible churches going by the name "Christian" remained truly yielded to God and His truth, and led of His Spirit. After Constantine took virtual control of the visible, professing Church in the early fourth century, this visible organization became almost wholly pagan, and began

excommunicating and persecuting all who held to the true Word of God! Finally, it became necessary for real Christians, who, even as a scattered people, alone composed the true Christian Church, to flee from the jurisdiction of Rome in order truly to worship God! Thus, the visible, organized Church which rose to power was the FALSE Church — the "Great Whore" of Revelation 17.

Injected Into the Church

Nothing illustrates this very fact more vividly than the actual history of the injecting of Easter into the Western Church.

Here is the quick, brief history of it, from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th edition, Vol. VIII, pp. 828-829):

"There is no indication of the observance of the Easter festival in the New Testament, or in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers . . . . The first Christians [the original true Church] continued to observe the Jewish [that is, God's] festivals, though in a new spirit, as commemorations of events which those festivals had foreshadowed. Thus the Passover, with a new conception added to it, of Christ as the true Paschal Lamb and the first fruits from the dead, continued to be observed.

"Although the observance of Easter was at a very early period in the practice of the Christian Church, a serious difference as to the day for its observance soon arose between the Christians of Jewish and those of Gentile descent, which led to a long and bitter controversy. With the Jewish Christians . . . the fast ended . . . on the 14th day of the moon at evening . . . without regard to the day of the week. The Gentile Christians on the other hand [that is, the beginning of the Roman Church, now substituting pagan for true Christian doctrines] . . . identified the first day of the week with the resurrection, and kept the preceding Friday as the commemoration of the crucifixion, irrespective of the day of the month.

"Generally speaking, the Western Churches [Catholic] kept Easter on the 1st day of the week, while the Eastern Churches [containing most of those who remained as part of the true Christian Church] followed the Jewish

rule. [That is, observing Passover on the 14th of the first sacred month instead of the pagan Easter.]

"Polycarp, the disciple of John the Evangelist, and bishop of Smyrna, visited Rome in 159 to confer with Anicetus, the bishop of that see, on the subject, and urged the tradition *which he had received from the apostles* of observing the 14th day. Anicetus, however, declined. About forty years later (197), the question was discussed in a very different spirit between Victor, bishop of Rome, and Polycrates, metropolitan of proconsular Asia [the territory of the Churches at Ephesus, Galatia, Antioch, Philadelphia, and all those mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3 — the Churches established through the Apostle Paul]. That province was the only portion of Christendom which still adhered to the Jewish usage. Victor demanded that all should adopt the usage prevailing at Rome. This Polycrates firmly refused to agree to, and urged many weighty reasons to the contrary, whereupon Victor proceeded to excommunicate Polycrates and the Christians who continued the Eastern usage [that is, who continued in God's way, as Jesus, Peter, Paul, and all the early true Church had done]. He was, however, restrained [by other bishops] from actually proceeding to enforce the decree of excommunication . . . and the Asiatic churches retained their usage unmolested. We find the Jewish [true Christian Passover] usage from time to time reasserting itself after this, but it never prevailed to any large extent.

"A final settlement of the dispute was one among the other reasons which led Constantine to summon the council at Nicaea in 325. At that time the Syrians and Antiochenes were the solitary champions of the observance of the 14th day. The decision of the council was unanimous that Easter was to be kept on Sunday, and on the same Sunday throughout the world, and that 'none hereafter should follow the blindness of the Jews.' [That is, in plain language, the Roman Church now decreed that none should be allowed to follow the ways of Christ — of the true Christian Church!]

". . . The *few* who afterwards separated themselves from the unity of the church [Roman Church], and con-

tinued to keep the 14th day, were named *'Quarto-decimani,'* and the dispute itself is known as the *'Quartodeciman* controversy.' "

Thus you see how the politically organized church at Rome grew to great size and power by adopting popular pagan practices and how she gradually stamped out the true teachings, doctrines, and practices of Christ and the true Church, so far as any collective practice is concerned.

The First Historical Records

The early Church of God in New Testament times was taught that Jesus was in the grave three days and three nights — that He arose at the close of the third day after the crucifixion. The crucifixion occurred upon a Wednesday, April 25, A.D. 31. (This historical date of the Passover is demonstrated in our booklet *The Crucifixion Was Not on Friday.* Write for your free copy.)

The Passover was observed annually, on the eve of Christ's death, on Nisan 14 of God's Sacred Calendar. This New Testament practice was followed in the West universally until shortly after the death of the Apostle John. In the Eastern Roman Empire the true practice continued even longer.

Here is what happened in the East!

A calendar change occurred during the middle of the second century A.D., after which new ideas began to be introduced into the professing Christian world. The true Christians who fled Jerusalem "continued to use the Jewish cycle [God's method of reckoning the Passover in the Sacred Calendar] till the bishops of Jerusalem who were of the circumcision were succeeded by others who were not of the circumcision [unconverted Gentiles — and] . . . they began to *invent* other cycles" (Bingham's *Antiquities of the Christian Church,* p. 1152).

This same author continues: "We see, at this time [beginning about A.D. 142, that] the Jewish calculation [determined by God's Calendar which the Jews had accurately preserved] was generally rejected by the . . . church, and yet no certain one agreed upon in its room [stead] . . . ."

Christians Kept the Passover

Jesus Christ kept the Passover. So did the Apostle John. And so did some Christians in Scotland even until the 7th century A.D.

This information comes from no less an ecclesiastical authority than the church historian Bede. His *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* would astound many who have assumed that Christ and the early apostles all kept Easter.

He writes that "John, following the customs of the Law, used to begin the Feast of Easter [actually the *Passover*] on the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month, whether it fell on the Sabbath or on any other day" (III, 25).

The Apostle John was the author of five books of the New Testament and the "disciple whom Jesus loved." Yet he kept the Passover on the 14th day of the first month (Nisan) just as God commanded in the time of Moses. That is the plain statement of this early Catholic theologian!

But where did John's custom come from? From the very example of Jesus Christ! "Nor did our Lord, the Author and Giver of the Gospel, eat the old Passover or institute the Sacrament of the New Testament to be celebrated by the Church in memory of His Passion on . . . [any other day], but on the fourteenth" (*Eccl. History,* III, 25).

Bede thus reiterates what the Bible itself plainly tells us — that Christ partook of the old Passover and then substituted the New Testament symbols of the bread and wine on the *14th of the first month.*

The custom of keeping the *New Testament* Passover, after the example of Christ and John, persisted among isolated groups for centuries. Bede tells us that some faithful were still keeping it in Scotland in the *7th century!* (II, 19.)

This is how the Passover — sometimes called Lord's Supper or Eucharist — was gradually rejected.

The Lord's Supper on Saturday!

Remember that up to this point the Churches of God universally understood that Jesus rose after three days — on Saturday evening shortly before sunset.

With the rejection of God's Sacred Calendar by many in the professing Christian world, the many now began to do what seemed right to them. Not only did they begin to miscalculate the annual occurrence of the Passover, but in the East they began to observe the Passover weekly on Saturday, the Sabbath, believe it or not! Here is the proof:

For over 200 years this custom was a universal practice of the Eastern churches. The church historian Socrates wrote in his *Ecclesiastical History,* book V, chapter 22: "While therefore some in Asia Minor observed the day above-mentioned [he means that some continued to observe the Passover on the 14th of Nisan as the apostles did] others in the East kept this feast on the Sabbath indeed. . . ." By "sabbath" all early writers meant Saturday!

So universal was the custom of observing the "Lord's Supper" on Saturday that he continued to write: "For although almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the sabbath of every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at *Rome,* on account of some ancient tradition, *have ceased to do this."*

Did you catch the real significance of this quotation?

The Passover was transformed from an annual memorial in memory of the death of Christ into a weekly memorial in honor of His resurrection, which occurred on Saturday. These weekly "passovers" were called the "sacred mysteries." A part of those ancient mysteries was later the festival of Easter.

But Easter did not enter suddenly. It entered slowly, under the pretext of being a Christian custom.

Many faithful were still observing the practices of the original true Church. Others began to hold the "sacred mysteries" every Saturday to honor, as they thought, the

resurrection of Jesus Christ. But how were the false teachers going to alter the knowledge that Jesus was three days and three nights in the tomb?

"Good Friday-Easter Sunday" Tradition

Let's notice! From the *Syriac Didascalia,* composed shortly before the time of Constantine, we have a record of what happened in those early days. False teachers began to interpret the three days and three nights in the following clever fashion:

They claimed Jesus suffered on the cross, supposedly on Friday, for about six hours. The daylight hours from nine in the morning to noon they counted as one day. The hours from noon to three o'clock — when the land was darkened — they reckoned as the first night. Then the time from three o'clock to sunset was reckoned as the second day. Friday night to Saturday morning became the second night; the daylight of Saturday, the third day; and Saturday night to Sunday morning, the third night.

A very clever argument — and it deceived a great many people! Those false ministers twisted the truth that Jesus was in the grave three days and three nights.

For the first time the idea of a Sunday resurrection was injected into the churches. Now observe what happened.

Easter Sunday Begins Earlier at Rome

In commenting on those who did *not* observe the Passover in accordance with the practice of the apostles, Irenaeus, who lived toward the close of the second century, wrote to Bishop Victor of Rome, "We mean Anicetus, and Pius, and Hyginus, and Telesphorus, and Xystus. They neither observed it [the true Passover on the 14th of Nisan] *nor did they permit those after them to do so"* (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* Vol. I, p. 243).

Who were these men? — bishops of the church at Rome! Here is the first record, by a Catholic, of the fact

that the Roman bishops no longer observed the Passover at the correct God-given time, but on a Sunday!

It was Bishop Xystus (his name is also spelled Sixtus) who was the first recorded individual to prevent the proper observance of the Passover, and to celebrate the sacred mysteries annually on a Sunday. Irenaeus speaks further of him, declaring that his doctrine was in direct "opposition" to the practice of the remainder of the churches. Bishop Sixtus was living at the beginning of the second century, just after the Apostle John died.

Notice, too, that Easter Sunday did not begin with Peter or Paul in the 60's A.D., but with Sixtus in the second century!

Here you have the astounding origin of Easter Sunday in the Western churches. Together with this practice, the "sacred mysteries" were also observed every Sunday!

The Romans Divided

The introduction of this custom naturally divided the Christians at Rome. The Catholic historian Abbé Duchesne wrote: "There were many Christians of Asia in Rome at that time [remember that the Church of God at Rome was founded by those who came from Asia Minor where Paul preached] and the very early Popes, Xystus and Telesphorus, saw them every year keep their Pasch [the true Passover] the same day as did the Jews. They maintained that was correct. It was allowed to pass . . . though the rest of Rome observed a different use" (*The Early History of the Church,* Vol. I, p. 210).

These are startling facts, but they are true! It is time we knew about them!

Irenaeus wrote even more regarding the observance of Easter at Rome and elsewhere as follows: "But Polycarp also was not only instructed by the apostles, and acquainted with many that had seen Christ, but was also appointed by apostles in Asia, bishop of the Church of Smyrna. . . . He also was in Rome in the time of Anicetus [bishop of Rome around 154 A.D.] and caused many to turn away from the . . . heretics to the Church of God, proclaiming that he had received from the apostles this

one and sole truth . . ." While at Rome, Polycarp discussed the matter of Easter with the Roman bishop.

Irenaeus continued: "For neither could Anicetus persuade Polycarp not to observe it [the Passover] because he had always observed it with John the disciple of our Lord, and the rest of the apostles, with whom he associated; and neither did Polycarp persuade Anicetus to observe it, who said that he was bound to follow the customs of the presbyters before him" (Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History,* book V, chapter 24, quoted in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* Vol. 1, p. 244).

Counterfeit Vision

Shortly after Polycarp left, there appeared an amazing letter — said by many scholars to have been a deliberate forgery. This letter states: "Pope Pius, who lived about 147, had made a decree, That the annual solemnity of the *Pasch* [*Pasch* is the Greek word for *Passover*] should be kept on the Lord's day [Sunday] and in confirmation of this he pretended, that Hermes [Hermas], his brother, who was then an eminent teacher among them, had received instruction from an angel, who commanded that all men should keep the *Pasch* on the Lord's day" (Joseph Bingham, *Antiquities of the Christian Church,* pp. 1148-1149).

Of this same hoax, we read in *Apostolical Fathers,* by James Donaldson, page 324: "One of the letters forged in the name of Pius, where one Hermas [Hermes] is mentioned as the author; and it is stated that in his book a commandment was given through an angel to observe the Passover on a Sunday."

If this letter was a deliberate forgery, it was invented after Polycarp's time in an effort to lend weight to the custom of Anicetus, bishop of Rome, who maintained the Sunday observance of the Eucharist or Passover. If it was not a forgery, then Pius himself was the author of this deceptive letter. (Pius died just prior to the visit of Polycarp to Rome.)

Constantine — the Man of Power

Constantine then convoked the first general council of the Christian-professing world. The Council of Nicaea

decided, under his authority, that Easter must be celebrated on Sunday and that the Passover must be forbidden!

Without regard to these decisions, many continued faithful. For this reason Constantine issued an edict declaring: "We have directed, accordingly, that you be deprived of all houses in which you are accustomed to hold your assemblies . . . public or private" (*Life of Constantine,* book III).

Easter Still Observed on Different Sundays

Though everyone was now forced to observe Easter or flee the urban areas of the Roman Empire, the churches were still divided over the exact Sunday for Easter. Here is how confusing matters became:

"But notwithstanding any endeavours that could be used then, or afterwards, there remained great differences in the church about it for many ages. For the churches of Great Britain and Ireland did not accord with the Roman church in keeping Easter on the same Sunday, till about the year 800. Nor was the Roman way fully received in France, till it was settled there by the authority of Charles the Great . . ." (Bingham's *Antiquities of the Christian Church,* p. 1151).

These are startling facts — but they ought to make you wake up to the truth! It is high time we learned exactly what has happened to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to the practices of the New Testament Church of God these past 1900 years!

True Christians Kept Passover

The New Testament reveals that Jesus, the apostles, and the New Testament Church, both Jewish- and Gentile-born, observed God's Sabbaths, and God's Festivals — weekly and annually! Take your Bible and carefully read Acts 2:1; 12:3-4 (remember the word "Easter" here is a mistranslation in the King James Version — originally inspired "Passover," and so corrected in the *Revised Standard Version*); Acts 18:21; 20:6, 16; I Corinthians 16:8.

Eusebius, historian of the early centuries of the Church, speaks of the true Christians observing Passover on the 14th of Nisan, first month of the Sacred Calendar.

"A question of no small importance arose at that time. For the parishes of all Asia, as from an older tradition, held that the fourteenth day of the moon, on which day the Jews were commanded to sacrifice the lamb, should be observed as the feast of the Saviour's passover . . . the bishops of Asia, led by Polycrates, decided to hold to the old custom handed down to them. He himself, in a letter which he addressed to Victor and the church of Rome, set forth in the following words the tradition which had come down to him:

" 'We observe the exact day; neither adding, nor taking away. For in Asia also great lights have fallen asleep, which shall rise again on the day of the Lord's coming, when he shall come with glory from heaven, and shall seek out all the saints. Among these are Philip, one of the twelve apostles . . . and, moreover, John, who was both a witness and a teacher, who reclined upon the bosom of the Lord . . . and Polycarp in Smyrna, who was a bishop and martyr; and Thraseas, bishop and martyr from Eumenia . . . the bishop and martyr Sagaris . . . the blessed Papirius, or Melito . . . . All these observed the fourteenth day of the passover according to the Gospel, deviating in no respect, but following the rule of faith' " (*Ecclesiastical History,* book V, chapters XXIII and XXIV).

But as the false, paganized church grew in size and political power, decrees were passed in the fourth century A.D. imposing the death sentence upon Christians found keeping God's Sabbath, or God's Festivals. Finally, in order to keep the true way of God, many Christians (composing the true Church) fled for their lives.

But another large portion of the true Church of God, failing to flee, yet remaining true to God's truth, paid with their lives in martyrdom (Rev. 6:9; 13:15; 17:6; 18:24). History records that more than 50 million were martyred!

They loved obedience to God more than their lives! Do you?

But through all generations, through every century,

though persecuted, scattered, unrecognized by the world, many true Christians have kept alive the true Church of God — the Church composed of those Satan cannot deceive! (Matt. 24:24.)

What God Did Command

The "communion," often called the "Lord's Supper," is actually the Passover — as the ordinance should more properly be called. On observing the Passover, as on every practice, Jude exhorts "that ye should contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints."

Now that we know the *pagan* origin of the Easter celebration, let's clear away the web of error that covers the truth about keeping the Passover, the memorial of Christ's death.

Let's examine the way Jesus observed this ordinance, because we can't be wrong if we follow His example. In Luke 22:14-20, we read, "And when *the hour was come,* he [Jesus] sat down .... And he took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: *this do in remembrance* of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

Notice, it was "when the hour was come," that Jesus introduced the unleavened bread and the wine. There was a definite time — a definite hour — when He held this ordinance as an example for us.

Notice, too, He commanded them to observe it — "This do"! And why? "In remembrance of me," said Jesus. He instituted this New Testament way of keeping the Passover, on that tragic night, the very eve of His death.

In Matthew's account, the Bible shows that this ordinance was at the very time of the Passover, "as they were eating" (Matt. 26:2, 26). Jesus knew that His time had come. He was our passover, sacrificed for us (I Cor. 5:7).

The Passover had always been held on the eve of the 14th of God's first month, according to the Sacred or Jewish Calendar. It was the night of the final and last Passover supper that Jesus introduced these New Testament emblems — the unleavened bread and the wine — in place of the lamb that was always slain annually.

For a full explanation of the *original* Passover as God instituted it, write immediately for our free booklet *Pagan Holidays or God's Holy Days — Which?*

Remember Jesus commanded: "This *do* in remembrance of me." Why? Because the Passover was commanded "forever."

The Passover was to be observed *annually,* along with the Days of Unleavened Bread. "Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season year to year" (Ex. 13:10). Jesus set us an example (I Peter 2:21), observing this ordinance at the same time once a year (Luke 2:42). Suppose the Israelites in Egypt had observed this ordinance at some other time than that set by God? They would not have been saved when the death angel passed by that night! God does things on time. He has given us an exact time for this ordinance. Jesus instituted the New Testament symbols "when the hour was come."

The Ordinance of Humility

In giving us their accounts, Matthew, Mark and Luke describe the taking of unleavened bread and wine. But John relates another part of this ordinance.

In the 13th chapter of John we notice that after the Passover supper was ended (verse 2), Jesus took a towel (verse 4) and began to wash His disciples' feet (verse 5).

"So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:12-15).

If any of you are wondering if this ordinance of humility is a command to you, then turn to Matthew 28:19, 20. Here Jesus said to these same disciples: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them . . . *teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded* YOU." So they were to teach us to observe all things whatsoever Jesus commanded them!

Kept Once a Year in the Apostolic Church

In I Corinthians 5:7, 8, Paul tells the Corinthians: "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: *Therefore let us keep the feast,* not with old leaven . . . but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." And in the 11th chapter he gives the directions regarding this ordinance.

Some misunderstand verse 26 which says: "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup," by interpreting it "take it as often as you wish." But it does not say that!

It says "as often" as you observe it, "ye do show the Lord's death till he come." Even Jesus commanded, "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in *remembrance* of me" (verse 25). We do it in remembrance of the Lord's death — a memorial of His death. As you know, memorials are celebrated annually, once a year, on the anniversary of the events commemorated. So we observe the memorial of Christ's death annually. And just as often as each year comes around, we are to "show the Lord's death till he come," by keeping this memorial.

Christ instituted this ordinance on the eve of His death. It was the 14th of Abib, by God's Sacred Calendar, in the very beginning of the day. God starts days at sunset, not midnight. So, later that same day, after Jesus had gone out to Gethsemane, Judas Iscariot led the crowd to seize Jesus. Then He was crucified later that same day, in the daylight part of this same 14th of the month Abib.

By following the example of Jesus in observing this sacred ordinance at the same time He did — the very same time the Passover was forever commanded to be observed — we continue to remember His death, annually, on the eve of the crucifixion.

Some always question the meaning of Paul in verses 27-29, in I Corinthians 11. The apostle is not speaking about a Christian being worthy or unworthy to take it. It is speaking of the *manner* in which it is done. We take it unworthily if we take it wrongly, in the wrong manner. Once we learn the truth about its observance, and yet take it at any other time than when God says, then we take it

unworthily. We take it unworthily if we do not accept the body and blood of Christ. So let's not take this most sacred ordinance to our condemnation, but take it *worthily* instead!

"Easter" a Mistranslation

Following the example of Jesus and the apostles, the early Church observed the Passover, and the Days of Unleavened Bread which immediately followed. Notice Acts 12:3. The Holy Spirit of God inspired these words: "Then *were* the days of unleavened bread." But in the next verse we read of "Easter."

We have already seen that "Easter" was injected into the Church years after the time of Christ. Again, this word "Easter" is a mistranslation. The original Greek word is *pascha,* meaning Passover. In every other place, exactly the same word is used in the original and always rendered Passover. Many other translations faithfully render this verse in Acts as "intending after the Passover to bring him forth to the people."

So this verse, instead of mentioning Easter, really proves that the Church, ten years after the death of Christ, was still observing Passover.

What Does "Break Bread" Mean?

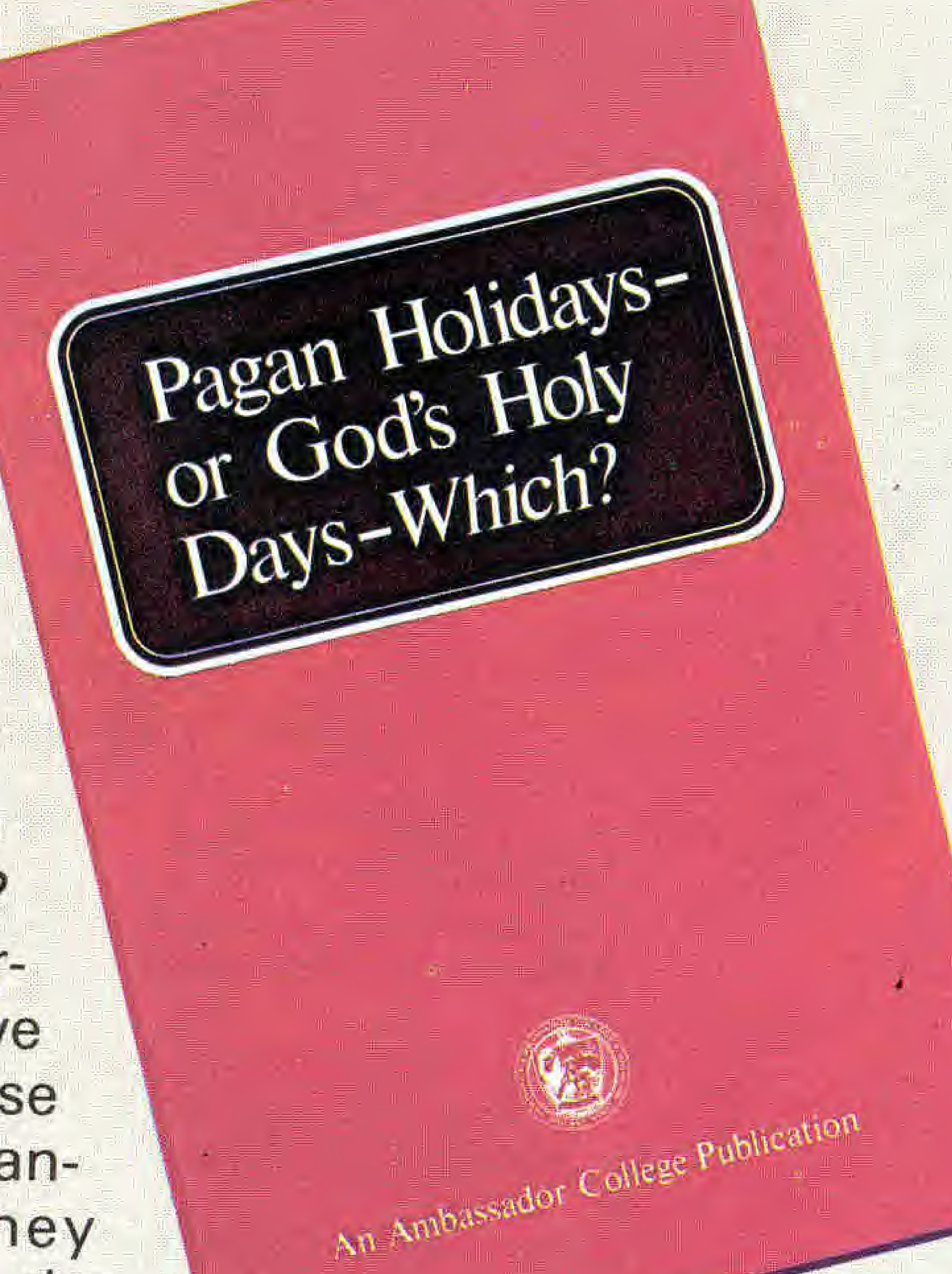
There are some denominations that read Acts 20:7 as a proof that the "Lord's *Supper*" should be taken each Sunday *morning!* First notice that this was after the Days of Unleavened Bread (verse 6). Paul was preaching a farewell meeting, not on Sunday morning, but on Saturday night. It was after midnight (verse 7), that they broke bread because they were hungry. When they "had broken bread, *and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day,*" Paul departed.

So this was just an ordinary meal!

The same expression "break bread" is found in Acts 27:34, 35. "Wherefore I pray you to take some *meat . . . he took bread . . .* and when he had *broken it, he began to eat.*" Also Acts 2:46: "And *breaking bread* from house to house, did *eat their meat* with gladness." This could not

possibly have been the "Lord's Supper" or, more properly, Passover, because Paul says that if we take it to satisfy our hunger we take it to our condemnation (I Cor. 11:34). In that day, everyone "broke bread" at ordinary meals, because they did not have the kind of bread that we slice. Jesus broke bread because it was at the Passover supper, while eating a meal.

We need to return to the faith once delivered. Let us humbly and obediently observe this sacred ordinance as we are commanded, at the scriptural time, after sunset, the 14th of Abib according to the Sacred Calendar. If you haven't as yet written about the observance of this ordinance, write us immediately for our booklet *How Often Should We Partake of the Lord's Supper?* □



DOES Biblical revelation establish whether we are to keep certain days holy? Does it make any difference to God whether we keep them? Were these days only given to ancient Israel? Are they binding today only on the Jewish people, while Christians are commanded to keep such holidays as Christmas and Easter?

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